

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule Study Lake Okeechobee, Florida

Proposed Action: In addition to the current regulation schedule, five additional alternative regulation schedules were evaluated in the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule Study (LORSS).

Type of Statement: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Lead Agency: Jacksonville District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Abstract: This Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement supports the proposed operational changes to the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule. Over the past few years, due to heavy rainfall and numerous hurricanes, the lake stage has reached, and sometimes remained at higher than normal levels. Higher than desirable lake levels frequently result in high volume regulatory releases to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries. These high lake stages and high volume releases to the estuaries contribute to disrupted productivity in the ecological communities of Lake Okeechobee and its estuaries. All alternatives evaluated were based on criteria for managing Lake Okeechobee at a lower level than the current water regulation schedule. The issue of public health and safety based on the integrity issue of the Herbert Hoover Dike was also a key factor in the decision making process to select a preferred alternative regulation schedule. The preferred alternative regulation schedule attempts to balance competing objectives including flood control, water supply, navigation and enhancement of fish and wildlife resources. However, with a multi-purpose lake, managing for better performance of one objective often leads to poorer performance in satisfying competing objectives. The alternative regulation schedule recommended represents the best operational compromise at this time to improve the environmental health of certain major ecosystems, while providing for public health and safety as it pertains to the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule and the Herbert Hoover Dike.

For more information contact: Yvonne L. Haberer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, Planning Division, P.O. Box 4970, Jacksonville, Florida 32232-0019, phone (904) 232-1701 or facsimile 232-3442.

The official closing date for the receipt of comments is 45 days from the date on which the notice of availability of this Draft SEIS appears in the Federal Register. The expected Federal Register date is August 18, 2006.



**U.S. Army Corps
of Engineers**
Jacksonville District